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## THE PRESERVATION OF ALABAMA HISTORY[1]

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For a long time the people of Alabama, like the people of other Southern States, were heedless of their past and indifferent toward the preservation of their historical records. Subduing the forests, tilling the rich virgin soil, fortifying against the attacks of savages and wild beasts, bettering their financial condition—these were the chief concern of the pioneers and early settlers. But by 1845 the broad margin of the frontier had receded; better roads, better dwellings and better schools had come into being; and a period of prosperity seldom equaled in the annals of any country had dawned. There was leisure now for social intercourse, for reading, investigation, writing, and for literary entertainment. Obviously the time was propitious for writing the history of the State, but where were the materials from which the fabric of that history could be woven?

The first essay at writing Alabama history was made by Albert James Pickett, who undertook to cover the period from the earliest times to the admission of the State into the Union in 1819. Taking up his pen in 1847, he soon found the task so beset with difficulties that he was "sometimes almost resolved to abandon the attempt." "I have sought materials for a correct

[1] The information for this paper has been gleaned from the following: *Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1898, 1899, 1904, 1906), Volumes II-V, edited by Thomas M. Owen; *Report of the Alabama History Commission, 1900* (Montgomery, 1901); *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (Chicago, 1921), 4 volumes, by Thomas M. Owen; *The Establishment, Organization, Activities and Aspirations of the Department of Archives and History of the State of Alabama* (Montgomery, 1904), Bulletin No. 1, by the Director; *Laws Governing the Department of Archives and History* (Montgomery, 1907), Bulletin No. 4, compiled by the Director; *Alabama State Department of Archives and History . . . . Organization, Activities, Aspirations* (Montgomery, 1910), Leaflet 1; *Alabama State Department of Archives and History . . . . Research, Extension and Reference Service* (Montgomery, 1915), Leaflet 5. To Mr. Peter Brannon, Curator of the Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, I am also indebted for suggestions and sympathetic interest.

history of my country," he tells us in his preface, "wherever they were to be procured, whether in Europe or America, and without regard to cost or trouble. All the Atlantic States have Historical Societies, and books and manuscripts relating to those states have been collected. In addition to this, agents have been sent to Europe by different Legislatures, who have transcribed the colonial records which relate to their history. I have had none of these aids. I have been compelled to hunt up and buy books and manuscripts connected with the history of Alabama, and to collect oral information in all directions. I rejoice, however, to know that a Historical Society has recently been formed at Tuscaloosa by some literary gentlemen, and it gives me pleasure to reflect that the authors who may appear after my day, will not be subjected to the labor which it has been my lot to undergo."

The historical society to which Pickett refers owed its existence to the versatile genius of Dr. Basil Manly, prominent Baptist minister and president of the University of Alabama. In the spring of 1850 he addressed numerous letters to prominent citizens throughout the State, urging the importance of organizing an historical society, and announced a meeting in connection with the commencement exercises of that year. In response to his call, a number of representative men convened on July 8, 1850, in the old Federal court room at Tuscaloosa. Dr. Manly, in the address of the occasion, explained the objects of the proposed society, read a constitution which he had prepared, and suggested the enrollment of members. The constitution was adopted without change, forty-six members were enrolled, and officers for the ensuing year were elected: *President,* Alexander Bowie, of Talladega, eminent judge and trustee of the University; *First Vice President,* Col. Albert J. Pickett, of Montgomery, wealthy planter and historian; *Second Vice President,* Gen. E. D. King, of Perry County, wealthy planter and trustee of the University; *Secretary,* Joshua H. Foster, tutor of mathematics in the University; *Executive Committee,* Judge John J. Ormond, Dr. Basil Manly, Professor Michael Tuomey, Professor L. C. Garland, and Bishop N. H. Cobbs.

Thus was organized the Alabama Historical Society, the object of which, as declared in the constitution, was "to discover, procure, preserve, and diffuse whatever may relate to the natural, civil, literary and ecclesiastical history of the State of Alabama, and of the States in connection with her." The report of the Executive Committee in 1851, prepared by Joshua H. Foster, adds the following amplification: "The plan of our operations is one of vast magnitude, and the materials to be collected of almost endless variety. No one department of human research confines our system. It covers every subject of the natural history of the State in the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms. It spreads its wide embrace to receive the record of every important event, either past, or now transpiring, in our civil, religious, social and individual history."

The first annual meeting was held on July 14, 1851, at the University of Alabama, and for about ten years thereafter, with more or less regularity, these meetings were held chiefly during the commencements. On February 5, 1852, the Society was incorporated by act of the General Assembly.

During the first five years of its existence, Dr. Manly was the animating spirit of the Society, encouraging, complaining, persuading. In a letter dated September 20, 1850, he urges Judge Bowie to "prepare a minute account of the battles & other Indian memorials associated with Talladega; the history of the county, & town:—engage the Pastors to gather & arrange the facts about the churches; & every other matter can be equally well provided for." In the same letter he says: "Moody has been engaged to prepare the history of Tuscaloosa & its vicinity,—beginning with the first settlements, the organization of the county, Indian memoirs of all kinds, the churches—& *everything* —even to the 'gullies'—those great sores of the municipal body. This will begin at the right place, at home; and may furnish a specimen of what we wish in regard to other places . . . . Curry[2] must employ his elegant pen, & his accurate research for us." Other letters went forward to persons in many of the leading counties, asking for county and town histories.

[2] J. L. M. Curry, son-in-law of Judge Bowie, who lived at Talladega.

But the results were discouraging. "Moody," he writes in 1852, "has had the history of the county to write for our historical Society, *for two years*. He undertook it, promised to do it; and I don't believe that he has written a line, or made one memorandum." "I know of no way to rouse any body, not under my authority, which has not already been tried, to no purpose. And I do seriously fear that the whole affair will come to the ground." In 1853 he again writes to Judge Bowie: "Applications for county histories, town-histories, &c. &c.—have failed. The committee, itself, would never meet,—if I did not go around & remind them, & drum them up. Such has been the feeble state of my health, all this year, that I have often omitted that;—and then there had been no meeting . . . . But, I will say no more to discourage you.—Do the best you can, toward the history of your county;—Select all the most inspiring topics, the battles, sieges, escapes, adventures;—clothe them in your very felicitous style—and come along. We shall all perhaps be inspired with new zeal,—by your presence & example."

In 1855 Dr. Manly resigned the presidency of the University and left the State. Until the outbreak of the Civil War, the Society continued to meet annually at Tuscaloosa to listen to an "address" or to transact "business," but little was accomplished. At the instance of Professor Tuomey, it is true, a history of Blount County had been written by a certain George Powell and published by the Society as a brochure of some thirty-five printed pages; but the "collections" of the Society consisted of nothing more than the current newspapers of the State, generously contributed by intelligent editors and proprietors, a few old books of no great value, and a small collection of fossils and Indian relics. These were stored down town in the law office of the Secretary, James M. VanHoose, which consisted of two large rooms, a small room, a hall and a large back yard. In 1862 a company of Confederate soldiers found in these rooms comfortable barracks and used the valuable collection of newspapers to start the winter fires!

Twelve years later, when the period of war and reconstruction was ended, Joshua H. Foster, now professor of moral philosophy in the University, sought out the last Secretary, Col. VanHoose,

and, with his consent, gathered up the remaining books and papers of the Society and placed them in the University library for safe keeping. Not long thereafter, June 20, 1874, the Society was revived and reorganized. Increasing interest added to the membership, and many historical contributions were received, read and filed for publication.

At the annual session in 1878 it was resolved to hold monthly meetings for the accommodation of those who had papers to read. This suggested to the Secretary, John Snow, a successful business man, the feasibility of publishing a monthly periodical entitled the *Alabama Historical Reporter,* containing the minutes or proceedings of the Society and such other materials as might be pertinent. The project turned out to be fairly successful. Snow guaranteed the expense of publication and Walter Guild did the editorial work. Under these auspices the *Reporter* was extensively circulated throughout the country and soon brought the Society in touch with those of other states. Many valuable periodicals and publications were received in exchange from the societies of Massachusetts, New York, Wisconsin, Virginia, Tennessee and Georgia.

But this success was of no long duration. By the end of 1885 the *Historical Reporter* had ceased to appear even at irregular intervals, and attendance at the monthly meetings of the Society had reached the vanishing point. The Society continued to maintain a nominal existence; but the minutes, the subscription book, and the official accounts were misplaced and have never been recovered.

At the annual meeting on June 21, 1898, there was a substantial revival of interest, due to the *entree en scene* of Thomas McAdory Owen, who was destined to do more for the preservation of Alabama history than any other man or group of men had ever done. Deeply interested in history from childhood, with a penchant for collecting things, he had already published, while resident in Washington, D. C., a *Bibliography of Alabama* and a *Bibliography of Mississippi,* and had helped to organize the Southern Historical Society. Lawyer by profession and affable gentleman by instinct, he compiled briefs and made friends in the day time and meditated on history at night. The revival of

the Alabama Historical Society naturally occurred to him, and at his personal instance several papers were prepared in the spring of 1898 for the next annual meeting. In June, coming up to the commencement of the University, his *alma mater*, with these papers in his hand and a plan of procedure in his head, he induced Dr. W. S. Wyman, professor of Latin in the University and Vice President of the Society, to call the meeting to order.

Accordingly the Society met in Clark Hall, with Dr. Wyman in the chair. The Secretary, Col. R. A. Hardaway, being conveniently absent, Thomas M. Owen was designated to act. In the absence of a program, and no special order of business being suggested, Mr. Owen announced the papers which he had in hand and expressed his conviction that the cultured people of Alabama would eagerly co-operate with the Society if they could feel that their efforts would be fruitful. He thought the General Assembly could be induced to lend its aid if the subject were properly put before it. As a plan of procedure, he recommended and secured the adoption of the following resolutions:

"Whereas, The objects and work of the Alabama Historical Society can best be promoted by the plans hereinafter set forth, therefore be it resolved,

1. That the Secretary be and is hereby instructed and empowered to use all possible endeavor to build up the membership of the Society, to disseminate information as to its objects and work, and generally to further its interests and manage its affairs.

2. That he is hereby empowered to nominate, enroll and issue certificates to persons as members, resident, corresponding or honorary, who have the qualifications prescribed and who comply with the rules of the organization.

3. That he shall cause to be published, irrespective of previous publication by the Society, the proceedings of its several meetings from its organization to and including the annual meeting of 1897, together with all of the articles and papers heretofore presented, or collected, the latter to be carefully edited, which shall form Vol. I of the *Transactions*.

4. That he shall cause the proceedings and papers of this annual meeting to be carefully edited and published, together with such other papers, or documents, as he may deem advisable, which shall form Vol. II of the *Transactions*, etc.

5. That in carrying out these resolutions he shall be authorized to make all such expenditures for stationery, postage, print-

ing and binding, and clerical assistance, as he may deem necessary."

Thus the Secretary was to become, to all intents and purposes, the Society; and Thomas M. Owen was very properly elected to this responsible position. The other officers elected for the ensuing year were: *President*, Joseph Forney Johnston, Governor of Alabama; *Vice Presidents*, William LeRoy Broun, President of A. & M. College, Auburn; Col. Martin Luther Stansel, of Carrollton; Edward LaFayette Russell, of Mobile; Thomas Chalmers McCorvey, Professor of History and Philosophy, University of Alabama; and Peter J. Hamilton, of Mobile. *The Executive Committee*, in addition to the Secretary and the above named officers: Dr. William Stokes Wyman, Professor of Latin, University of Alabama; Dr. James Knox Powers, President of the University of Alabama; Dr. James Hill Foster, of Tuscaloosa; James Harris Fitts, of Tuscaloosa; and Judge James Jefferson Mayfield, of Tuscaloosa.

During the ensuing year, Mr. Owen, while still maintaining his law practice at Carrollton, devoted a good share of his superabundant energy, without compensation, to promoting the interests of the Historical Society. He wrote hundreds of letters, and made appeals personally and through the press, to the people of the State and elsewhere, for support and encouragement. By his influence, he secured from the General Assembly of the State an annual appropriation of $250 for two years to aid the Society in the publication of its transactions and papers. At his instance, too, another act was passed "To provide for the appointment of an Alabama History Commission," to consist of five persons, to be selected from the membership of the Society. The act provides that it shall be the duty of the Commission—

"Under such rules, regulations and plan of procedure as it may adopt, and without compensation, to make a full, detailed and exhaustive examination of all the sources and materials, manuscript, documentary and record of the history of Alabama from the earliest times, whether in domestic or foreign archives or repositories, or in private hands, including the records of Alabama troops in all wars in which they have participated, and also of the location and present condition of battlefields, historic houses and buildings, and other places and things of historic interest and importance in the State, and the said Commission

shall embody the result of said examination in a detailed report to the Governor of Alabama prior to the next ensuing session of the General Assembly, with an account of the then condition of historical work in the State and with such recommendations as may be desirable . . . . And the Governor shall submit said report to the ensuing session of the General Assembly with a plan for permanently fostering historic interest and the preservation of the records, archives and history of the State."

On this Commission the Governor appointed Thomas M. Owen, Dr. W. S. Wyman, Col. Sam Will John of Birmingham, Peter J. Hamilton of Mobile, and Professor Charles C. Thach of Auburn.

At the annual meeting of the Society on June 19, 1899, the Secretary reported his activities and received a unanimous and enthusiastic vote of thanks.

On the same day, June 19, 1899, the Commission held its first formal session, at the University, in the lecture room of Dr. Wyman. There were present Dr. Wyman, Professor Thach and Mr. Owen. Messrs. John and Hamilton, the remaining members, were detained at home on account of important business engagements. After a prolonged but informal discussion of the work, its purposes, importance and far-reaching scope, Mr. Owen as chairman submitted a tentative outline of the matters proposed to be covered by the researches:

"Formal Report to the Governor. (With recommendations)

Part I. An account of Manuscripts, Papers and Documents pertaining to Alabama in Official Repositories beyond the State.

1. Foreign Offices: 1.—British Archives; 2.—French Archives; and 3.—Spanish Archives.

2. Federal Offices: 1.—War Department; 2.—State Department; 3.—Navy Department; 4.—Interior Department (Patent Office, Land Office, Indian Affairs, Bureau of Education, etc.); 5.—Treasury Department; 6.—Post Office Department; 7.—Department of Justice; and 8.—The Offices of the Clerk of the H. of R. and of the Secretary of the Senate.

3. Adjacent States: 1.—Tennessee; 2.—Georgia; 3.— Louisiana; 4.—Florida; 5.—Mississippi.

Part II. An account of Manuscripts, Papers and Documents in Official Repositories within the State of Alabama.

1. Executive Offices: 1.—Governor; 2.—Secretary of State; 3.—Auditor; 4.—Treasurer; 5.—Superintendent of Education; 6.—Board of Health; 7.—Convict Inspectors; 8.—Attorney Gen-

eral; 9.—Superintendent of Agriculture; 10.—R. R. Commission; 11.—Clerk of the Sup. Ct.; 12.—Sup. Ct. Reporter; and 13.—Adjutant General.

2. County Offices. (To include descriptions of all county records.)

3. Municipalities. (To include an account of the municipal records of the principal Alabama towns, as Mobile, Montgomery, Birmingham, et al.)

4. Educational Institutions. (To include an account of the source material for a history of primary education, and of the records, etc., of the University of Alabama, Polytechnic Institute, et al.)

5. Church Organizations. (To include an account of the records of the different denominations, and of individual churches.)

6. Benevolent Institutions. (To include general Masonic Records, Temperance Societies, etc.)

Part III. An Account of Manuscripts, Papers and Documents in Private Hands.

1. Literary Remains of Public Characters. (To include papers left by Hawkins, Crowel, McKee, et al.)

2. Libraries and Societies.

3. Private Collectors and Students. (To include an account of collections made by Pickett, Brewer, Draper, et al.)

Part IV. War Records of Alabama. (To comprise accounts of Alabama war records in the offices of the U. S. Secretary of War and Adjutant General of the State, and in Private Hands.)

Part V. Aboriginal and Indian Remains, etc. 1.—Prehistoric Works; 2.—Indian Tribal Boundaries; 3.—Tribal Territorial Subdivisions; 4.—Town and Village Sites; 5.—Trails and Roads.

Part VI. Points and Places of Historic Interest in Alabama: 1.—Forts and Stockades; 2.—Battle Fields; 3.—Historic Houses; 4.—Historic Places not Otherwise Classified (as place of Burr's capture in Alabama); 5.—Places of Birth and Interment of Persons Prominent in Alabama History; and 6.—Scenes in Alabama History, and Portraits or Likenesses of Eminent Alabamians."

After careful and critical examination, this outline was agreed upon by the Commission, and assignments of the different parts of the work were made to the members. The chairman then issued a circular statement and appeal to the public, of which the following is an extract:

"This report will indicate fully and in detail *what* material is in existence, and *where* it is to be found, with notes on its probable value, accessibility, extent, etc. . . . . The Commission now appeals with confidence to students and scholars everywhere, and especially to public spirited Alabamians, for aid and co-operation. . . . . Hid away in old trunks, drawers, book-cases, and chests, are numbers of manuscript treasures: private letters, letter books, diaries or journals, weather notes, manuscript maps, account books, surveyor's note and field books, etc. In the hands of participants, or their descendants, in the Indian Wars, the Texan and Mexican Wars, and the late War Between the States, are doubtless to be found valuable letters, journals of campaigns, and rolls of various commands, as well as mementoes of these struggles. The location, extent and present ownership of all such material is earnestly desired; and if possible a gift of the same to the Historical Society."

By the end of 1900 the task set for the History Commission was all but completed. Though Peter J. Hamilton, Sam Will John, O. D. Street and a few others made small contributions, the bulk of the work devolved upon Thomas M. Owen[3]. In the Report to the Governor, drafted by Mr. Owen, the Commission recommends—

"the creation of a Department of Archives and History, charged with the custody of the State official archives, and the collection and creation of a State library, museum and art gallery, with particular reference to the history and antiquities of Alabama, to be under the supervision of a Director. A liberal continuing appropriation should be made to conduct the Department, maintain its official staff, purchase necessary equipment, and otherwise enable it to accomplish the object of its creation. In addition to the accumulation of books, pictures, museum articles, etc., the Director should be charged with the duty of compiling a series of State archives as hereinafter recommended. To the Department could also be committed the matter of marking historic sites, etc. As there would be no necessity for two collections, the accumulation of the Historical Society so far made, could properly form the nucleus of the collection of the Department, and thereafter the functions of the former as a collecting agency should cease."[4]

[3] *Report of the Alabama History Commission, 1900* (Montgomery, 1901), pp. 447.

[4] It was the intention of the History Commission that the existence of the Historical Society should "continue (1) for the purpose of stimulating interest in the various parts of the State through its membership, (2) to provide a body of students for regular meetings for historical discussion, (3) to facilitate the accumulation of historical objects, and (4) to raise additional funds for publication." But the Society was soon to sing its *Nunc Dimittis*. The headquarters were removed to Montgomery in 1901, and the time of meeting was changed from the middle of June to the end of December. In 1905, by consent of its members, the Society ceased to function as a separate organization, its activities being taken over by the Department of Archives and History.

On receipt of the Report, Governor William J. Samford transmitted a special message to the General Assembly urging the establishment of the department recommended. In the Senate William D. Jelks, D. J. Meador and Hugh Morrow, and in the House of Representatives Richard H. Clark, William W. Brandon, Henry B. Foster and William B. Bankhead were conspicuous in advocacy. The bill became law on February 27, 1901. On March 2 following, the new department began to function in the cloak room of the Senate Chamber, with Thomas M. Owen as Director and his sister, Miss Dolly Owen, as his devoted secretary.

"This step," says an authority, "was the first known recognition and application of the principles of public support of archive preservation and history work and enterprise through a separate bureau, commission or department of State, located in the capitol, and administered by a State official regularly chosen and required to devote his entire time to his duties. This plan is altogether the creation of Dr. Owen, and it was his unique good fortune to be both the pioneer, maker and perfector of a great institutional advance in American government and political science."[5]

The act of creation prescribed the objects and purposes of the Department as "the care and custody of official archives, the collection of materials bearing upon the history of the State, and the territory included therein, from the earliest times, the completion and publication of the State's official records and other historical materials, the diffusion of knowledge in reference to the history and resources of the State, the encouragement of historical work and research, and the performance of such other acts and requirements as may be enjoined by law."

"The care and custody of official archives" involved the assortment, arrangement, labeling, filing, indexing and cataloguing of all that vast body of official records, preserved and not in current use, which has been accumulating at the capitol since the formation of the Territorial government in 1817.

The Territorial capitol of Alabama was St. Stephens. Here were located the offices of the Governor, Secretary of State,

[5] *The South in the Building of the Nation*, XII, 244-245.

Auditor, Treasurer, and Attorney General. Here was also the place of meeting of the two sessions of the Legislative Council and the House of Representatives, the first from January 19 to February 14, 1818, and the second, from November 2 to November 21, 1818. The second and last session located the permanent seat of government at Cahaba but made Huntsville the temporary seat "until suitable buildings and accommodations can be provided at the town of Cahaba." The same act further provided, "that all officers, who are required by law to keep their offices at the seat of government, shall be allowed until the meeting of the Convention, or next Legislature, to remove the same to Huntsville, and the necessary expenses of the removal of the public seal, books, records and papers shall be defrayed by the Territory." On June 26, 1819, the *Alabama Republican* carried this brief news item: "His Excellency, Governor Bibb, arrived in Huntsville on Monday last. The Secretary of the Territory is daily expected, and the public records, etc. have already arrived here, where they will remain while this place continues to be the seat of government."

From Huntsville the records were transferred to Cahaba and from Cahaba to Tuscaloosa, all in a period of six years. What loss resulted from this constant transportation from place to place and from improper storage can only be surmised. Tuscaloosa remained the capital for twenty years, 1826-1846. Then the public records were again on wheels. Packed in 113 boxes, loaded in 13 wagons, weighing 26,704 pounds, they were carried overland to Montgomery, the new capital, at a cost of $1,325. Three years later, December 14, 1849, the new capitol building burned to the ground. The fire originated in the roof over the House of Representatives. The combined efforts of the heads of the departments, the legislators and citizens saved the public records and other property in the basement and on the second floor, but because of the intense heat the contents of the State library on the third floor could not be saved, and its fine collection of early documents was destroyed.

Since 1849 there has been no destructive fire at the capitol, and public records have normally accumulated in large quantities, and with the multiplication of offices they have still further

increased. The most interesting and valuable are those originally preserved in the Chief Executive Department, and the offices of the Secretary of State, the Auditor, the Treasurer and the Adjutant General. These consist of correspondence received, letter-press copy books, legislative records, constitutional convention records, elections, census returns, pardons, land records and maps, civil official registers, bonds, incorporations, military registers, pension records, vouchers, records of Alabama troops in the Indian troubles of 1836, the Mexican War, the War Between the States, etc. As fast as these records cease to be in current use in the various departments, they are now transferred to the Department of Archives and History, where they are cared for and made available to students for consultation.

The provision in the act of creation for "the completion and publication of the State's official records" has resulted in a plan for the compilation and publication of twelve volumes of State papers:

Volume I.—Fundamental charters, proclamations, acts of Congress, and constitutions, which affect the territory now embraced in Alabama, from the earliest times to the present.

Volume II.—Documents and papers connected with Spanish explorations and occupation of what is now Alabama, 1507-1813.

Volume III.—Documents and papers connected with French occupation, 1699-1763.

Volume IV.—Documents and papers connected with English occupation, 1763-1783.

Volume V.—Mississippi and Alabama Territorial documents, 1798-1819.

Volume VI.—Governors' messages, 1818-1904.

Volume VII.—Miscellaneous State documents: Banks and Finance, University, Schools, Boundaries, Indians, Internal Improvements, Slavery, etc., etc., 1818-1900.

Volume VIII.—Census and population statistics, 1800-1900.

Volume IX.—Official register, 1800-1900. (To include full roster of all State and county officials.)

Volume X.—Counties and county boundaries, 1800-1900. (To include in full acts creating, or changing names, establishing or changing county sites, or altering boundaries.)

Volume XI.—Abstracts of the records of the counties of Alabama, 1800 to 1819. (To include early deeds, wills, marriage records, etc.)

Volume XII.—War records. (To embrace (1) a reprint of the rolls of Revolutionary pensioners who lived in Alabama; (2) Rosters of commands from Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina, who served in the Creek War, 1813-1814; (3) Rosters and documents of the Indian Wars, 1832-1842; (4) Rosters and documents pertaining to Alabamians in the Texas Wars; (5) Rosters of Alabamians in the Mexican War; (6) Documentary records of Alabama in the War Between the States; and (7) Rosters and documents of Alabama commands in the Spanish-American War.

In addition to the foregoing, the elastic provision is made for the publication of "other historical materials." For inclusion in this miscellaneous class, an Alabama Local History collection is being brought together. It will embrace reminiscent and historical articles of value which have appeared in newspapers and periodicals, relating to counties and towns or other local areas in the State.

Within the scope of "materials bearing upon the history of the State, and the territory included therein, from the earliest times," printed sources have been regarded as of first importance. The Department, from its inception, has devoted every energy to building up a representative collection of books and pamphlets. These materials may be roughly classed as (1) all books whatever, relating to the State or any part of its history; (2) all writings of Alabama authors; (3) official and legislative documents, reports, circulars, bulletins, etc.; (4) municipal or local documents, reports, etc.; (5) religious and church documents and literature; (6) literature of all benevolent institutions; and (7) educational reports, catalogues, announcements, and other documents.

The act of creation further provides (Section 4) that "any State, County or other official is hereby authorized and empowered in his discretion to turn over to the Department for permanent preservation therein any official books, records, documents, original papers, newspaper files, and printed books not in current use in their offices." Some rare and valuable books and files have been collected under this authorization, but no special effort has been made systematically to bring together the materials contemplated in this provision.

The Department, since its establishment, has been receiving about two hundred dailies, weeklies, and irregular issues of the State press. All are carefully arranged, and are made immediately available for use. Dailies are bound in two to four books to the year, and weeklies, three years in one book. In the collection also are several files running consecutively through a long period, and some date prior to the admission of the State into the Union in 1819. There are four or five approximately full files for the years 1861-65.

Persistent appeals have been made to families and others having old letters and manuscripts, to deposit them in the collections of the Department for historical purposes, and also for better preservation. The response has not been general, but several hundred manuscripts have been received.

One of the conspicuous forms of the Department's activity has been the collection and preservation of illustrative historical materials in the form of portraits, views and liknesses of persons and scenes in Alabama history; relics of pioneers and pioneer life, as articles of dress, implements of labor, implements of the chase, and household furnishings; relics and personal belongings of eminent Alabamians, as library desks or tables, chairs, knives, dirks, dueling pistols or other fire arms, stock, knee or shoe buckles, drinking cups, watches, chains, snuff-boxes and canes; war relics, as uniforms, swords, arms and equipment; Indian relics, as pottery, weapons of all kinds, personal ornaments, and so forth.

The Department is under the supervision of a self-perpetuating board of trustees, one from each Congressional district, holding office for six years and without compensation. The general powers and duties of the board are set forth in the act of creation as follows:

"To adopt rules for its own government and also for the government of the Department; to elect a Director, and to provide for the selection or appointment of other officials, or employees, as may be authorized; to provide for the publication of historical material pertaining to the State under the supervision of the Director; to have the direction and control of the marking of historic sites, or houses, and the exploration of prehistoric and Indian mounds and other remains existing in the State; to con-

trol and expend such appropriations as may be made for the maintenance of the Department; and to do and perform such other acts and things as may be necessary to carry out the true intent and purpose of this Act."

The Director holds office for a term of six years, and has "the immediate management and control" of the department. His duties are comprehensively set forth in the act as follows:

"He shall have control and direction of the work and operations of the Department, he shall preserve its collections, care for the official archives that may come into its custody, collect as far as possible all materials bearing upon the history of the State and of the territory included therein, from the earliest times, prepare a biennial register hereinafter provided, diffuse knowledge in reference to the history and resources of the State; and he is charged with the particular duty of gathering data concerning Alabama soldiers in the War Between the States.

"He shall make an annual report to the board of trustees, to be by them transmitted to the Governor, to be accompanied by such historical papers and documents as may be deemed of importance by him, and the Director shall contract for the printing and binding of the said Report, which shall be paid for as other public printing and binding."[6]

The appropriations to the department have been as follows:

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| Act approved Feb. 27, 1901 | Salary of Director | $1,800.00 |
| | Maintenance | 700.00 |
| | | $2,500.00 |
| Act approved Feb. 13, 1903 | Maintenance, including salary of Director | $2,500.00 |
| Act approved Feb. 22, 1907 | Salary of Director | $2,500.00 |
| | Stenographer | 750.00 |
| Act approved Feb. 8, 1907 | Maintenance | 3,000.00 |
| | | $6,250.00 |
| Act approved Apr. 22, 1911 | Salary of Director | $3,000.00 |
| Act approved Mar. 30, 1911 | Stenographer | 750.00 |
| | Maintenance | 5,000.00 |
| | | $8,750.00 |
| Act approved Sept. 28, 1915 | Director | $3,000.00 |
| | Stenographer | 900.00 |
| | Maintenance | 6,000.00 |
| | | $9,900.00 |

[6] None of the annual reports of the Director has ever been published.

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| Act approved Sept. 30, 1919— | Salary of Director | $ 3,000.00 |
| | Salary of Chief Clerk | 2,000.00 |
| | Maintenance | 13,000.00 |
| | | $18,000.00 |
| Act. approved Sept. 29, 1923— | Salary of Director | $ 4,000.00 |
| | Chief Clerk | 2,400.00 |
| | Maintenance | 13,000.00 |
| | | $19,400.00 |
| Act approved Sept. 9, 1927— | Salaries of Director and clerical assistance and maintenance | $27,600.00 |

Prior to the present administration (Governor Bibb Graves), printing, binding, part of postage, stationery and supplies were allowed to be purchased from special funds for that purpose but now everything comes out of the one appropriation.[7]

Dr. Owen died on March 25, 1920, while serving his fourth term as Director of the Department. His widow, Mrs. Marie B. Owen, was elected as his successor and is still in office.

In promoting the great enterprise to which he devoted the best efforts of his useful life, Dr. Owen performed a distinctive service to his native State and to the cause of history; but many of his aspirations have never been fully realized. The series of historical publications which he planned, notably the State's official records, have never made their appearance in print, and one suspects that this task was never seriously undertaken. No search for material bearing on Alabama history has been made in foreign archives, and the Alabama Local History collection remains incomplete and unpublished. On the other hand, the Legislature in 1907 added library extension to the duties of the Department, and this new duty has been broadly met. The establishment of public and school libraries has been encouraged and assisted, and a system of traveling libraries maintained. For the use of members of the Legislature, State officers and others, a reference collection of current data and material, on subjects deemed of public interest and importance to the people of the State, has been brought together and arranged for consultation. The Department desires to be regarded as a bureau of information on all historical and statistical subjects for the State, and promises prompt and full response, as far as possible, to all inquiries. It aspires to be an uplifting, refining and stimulating force in State life, and in a degree it is meeting these ideals.

[7] Statistical information supplied through the courtesy of Mrs. Marie B. Owen.